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LB 75

The bill was introduced on January 4 of this year, referred to the Natural Resources Committee, advanced to General File. I do have committee amendments, Mr. President. (AM0445, Legislative Journal page 620.)

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Connealy, you're recognized to open on LB 75.

SENATOR CONNEALY: Thank you, Mr. President and members. I'm pleased to open on LB 75. It's an ethanol promotion bill. First of all, maybe I should give you a little background on my involvement on the issue so that especially the new members would know where I'm coming from. I've been involved in ethanol promotion research and plant development for, oh, many years, maybe since the 1980s. I've had the opportunity to serve on the Corn Board and the original Ethanol Authority. I was, at least part of the time, chair of both those boards. I'm a farmer and my farm sells corn to at least two ethanol plants, MCP and to Cargill, and Cargill is in my district. With that said, I want to explain a few points about LB 75. LB 75 is exactly like the amendment that we offered at the end of the session last year on LB 1234. That bill would have required ethanol to be in all blends of gasoline sold in the state. This is not LB 1234. This is not a mandate. LB 75 would simply require every retailer to offer ethanol-blended fuel at the lowest octane rating at their stations. You know, I call this as a consumer's choice bill because currently 38 percent of the gas stations in the state don't offer ethanol. There are large areas of the state where consumers cannot buy ethanol, and I believe that's wrong. Ethanol is a cleaner burning, environmentally-friendly fuel that, with its usage, creates jobs in this state. Many of the smaller stations not offering ethanol-blended fuel are in rural areas, subsequently not allowing agricultural producers to even buy their own product. There have been lots of arguments about this bill being a mandate, and that ethanol should be able to stand on its own merits. I understand those concerns, and I'd like to address the mandated aspect of fuel. Currently there are eight different requirements or mandated parts that were...of gasoline sold in the state. Straight hydrocarbon gasoline has many requirements or mandates, if you will. LB 75 will simply be an attempt to help us grow our own Nebraska